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**PEDAGOGICAL SUPPORT FOR PERSONAL AND
PROFESSIONAL SELF-DETERMINATION OF FOSTER
CHILDREN**

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Abstract

The development of society as a whole depends on self-determination of each citizen. Self-determination of a person occurs in school age. There are different programs and method which help schoolchildren in this process. But there is a special group of children in whom the process of self-determination is difficult and has specific characteristics – these are children living in foster (substitute) families. Children brought up in foster families require special systematic work that will help them to self-determine in life. The main questions of our study were as follows: under what conditions within the framework of the school it is possible to help the adopted child (a) optimize the relationship and interaction with the environment, (b) determine the near and far prospects of his personal and professional development; what should be the content of this work? To find a solution, special program of support for children age 7 to 15 had been created. The main idea of the program was that conditions should be created so that children gain experience in social activities by including them in solving real and virtual (imitated) situations that help stimulate internal self-knowledge and determine their personal position and professional future. The conditions for the pedagogical support for the formation of readiness for self-determination of foster children in school were identified: the creation of a specially organized educational and socializing environment for children; actualization of family relationships and joint activities necessary to optimize parent-child interaction; taking into consideration the characteristics of adopted child.

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1. Introduction

The study of how the process of self-determination of personality occurs is one of the most important interdisciplinary problems developed in the framework of a number of human sciences. The success of a person, his well-being depends on the success of this process. The development of society as a whole depends on self-determination of each citizen. Self-determination of a person, primarily personal and professional, occurs in school age, early adolescents. During this period the child grows up, interacts with adults and peers, nature and other surroundings, participate in various types of joint activities. The process of learning in school is part of the general process of forming individuality and socialization.

Self-determination is understood in a wide range of meanings - from making vital decisions to one-act independent actions in everyday life. From the point of view of self-determination, it is important that the child is ultimately able to answer key questions to himself in any significant situation:

- Who am I? – Awareness of their bodily, social, psychological characteristics.
- What am I doing? – Awareness of the content of the activity (I play, study, develop, lazy ...) and emotional state (I have fun, I'm offended, I'm interested ...).
- Why (why) am I doing this? – Understanding of the goals and meaning of activity (Bayborodova et al., 2019; Bayborodova et al., 2017).

However, there is a special group of children in whom the process of self-determination is difficult and has specific characteristics – these are children living in foster (substitute) families. These children have, as a rule, negative or impoverished experience acquired in the native family or orphanage. Living in foster families, children develop, master the most important social roles, prepare for a future life, but when they get into it, children encounter difficulties in relationships and mutual understanding. Children brought up in foster families require special systematic work that will help them to self-determine in life (Malloch et al., 2013; Semya et al., 2016).

2. Problem Statement

The process of personal and professional self-determination of children from substitute families is due to a number of features (Cherniavskaia et al., 2016; Semia, 2016; Zhiltsova & Chernyavskaya, 2017).

We had divided all the factors and features that determine the characteristics of the personal and professional self-determination of children from foster families into two groups.

1. The first group consists of factors that teachers cannot directly influence, but they should be taken into account while they organize support work for the process of children's professional and personal self-determination:

A. Factors caused by depriving a child of maternal care in the past, before living in a foster family, and contributing to the emergence of psycho-physiological characteristics that may complicate the work of building the ability for professional self-determination of children living in foster families:

- loss of basic trust to the world and people around;
- the distortion of the boundaries of the psychological space of the person;

tendency to psychological confluence;
loss of time perspective.

B. Factors due to the organization of the life of orphans and children left without parental care during their stay in the orphanage until the child is adopted into a foster family:

isolation and limited space of life;
prevalence of the directive-guardianship style in the system of relations "adult-child";
limited and monotonous social contacts;
Insufficient familiarity with the traditional children's culture that sets patterns of self-determination;
the impoverishment of the experience of family life.

2. The second group consisted of features that teachers, school psychologists and social workers can influence:

- The first feature is the limited life experience of the adopted child, which arises as a result of a breakdown in communication with the native family (maternal deprivation) and living in special institutions before being adopted into a new, foster family.
- The second feature is the common intellectual and developmental lag inherent in many children living in foster families, which manifests itself in a lag in creative imagination, independent judgments, in mental juxtaposition of verbal-logical form of thinking, and the presence of a child's limited circle of communication.
- The third follows from the first two features – in a similar situation, the value of the image of substitute parents in the formation of the child's self-awareness and self-determination is very large, at the same time, the specificity of relations with adoptive parents also affects the process of self-determination, making it more difficult. Moreover, not all substitute parents are pedagogically and psychologically literate. In addition, many adopted children in adolescence and / or upon reaching adulthood finish school and leave the foster family, remain "one to one" with difficulties in learning and adaptation in society.

After analyzing the identified features, we came to the conclusion that the work on forming the foundations of personal and professional self-determination of children from foster families should be carried out at school, by teachers and psychologists, and this work should be systematic (Frontini & Psifidou, 2015; Unesco, 2015; Vehviläinen & Löfström, 2016).

Findings of Chernyavskaya (2016), based on research of Super (1957), Brown (2002) and others, in the field of professional self-determination and the formation of students of different age groups help us to determine the components of readiness for professional self-determination of children living in foster families:

- autonomy – a professional image of oneself in the future (a child from a substitute family should have a realistic idea of his professional future: Who will I be? Who and what can affect the choice of my profession in the future?);

- knowledge and information:
 - ideas about the desired profession (What will be my professional field?);
 - ideas about the desired system of professional relations (with what people will I work, what place will I occupy in these relations, what role will I play at work?);
 - ideas about the image of the profession (What professional rights and responsibilities will I have? What functions will I perform at work? What are the features of the work itself? What means of labor will I need to perform professional duties? What degree of responsibility expects me?);
 - ideas about the rhythm of professional activity (What will my work schedule look like? How long will I need to be at work? What kind of working environment will I enroll?);
- ability to plan (What steps do I need to take to get the desired specialty?);
- decision-making ability (Are my capabilities and abilities comparable with the requirements that my desired profession makes?);
- a positive attitude to the world of professions and the need to make my professional choice (Do I know a profession? Why do I need to make a professional choice? How will my future profession help me in my life?) (Kronik & Akhmerov, 2015).

It is important to take into account the fact that foster children are taught together with children from native families, and it is impractical to separate them into a special group from an ethical point of view. Teachers organize work with the entire class, but its content takes into account, first of all, the features of the process of self-determination of the adopted child.

3. Research Questions

Our diagnostics, during which the indicators of children living in foster families and children from native families were compared, showed the necessity and relevance of organizing and conducting comprehensive pedagogical work with the personality of the adopted child.

The main questions of our study were as follows:

- under what conditions within the framework of the school it is possible to help the adopted child (a) optimize the relationship and interaction with the environment, (b) determine the near and far prospects of his personal and professional development;
 - What should be the content of this work?

To answer these questions, we conducted a theoretical study that allowed us to identify the main areas of support for personal and professional self-determination, a set of diagnostic methods was selected, a program for accompanying children from first to ninth grades was developed and implemented. The program differed in goals and objectives for each age from 7 to 15. The main idea of the program was that conditions should be created so that children from foster families gain experience in social activities by including them in solving real and virtual (imitated) situations that help stimulate internal self-knowledge and determine their personal position and professional future.

Any human abilities and determinations are coming to light and developing in his/her personal activity. In the activity, conditions arise to the formation of the ability to self-determination, if a person joins an activity voluntarily, realizes its significance for himself; participates in determining the goals, results of activities, ways of organizing it; situations of social and professional trials are created in which he can test, evaluate himself, his abilities; there is the opportunity to choose the type of work, your role, the form of organization of activities, partners for the performance of work, the nature of assistance; an analysis of the subject's activity, its achievements, successes, difficulties and problems that have arisen is organized; there is an opportunity to make independent decisions, to make changes to previously planned ideas and plans; encouraged initiative, the desire to show independence, to defend and justify their position, idea, choice.

4. Purpose of the Study

The aim of research presented was to analyze specific features and conditions of the process of self-determination of children living in foster (substitute) families. It is well known that their previous background of living in “subnormal” psychological and, sometimes, physical conditions in their native families, or experience of loss they already have, leads to various difficulties in personal development, and in self-determination as well. These specific features and conditions might be taken in consideration in the Program of professional self-determination elaborated in our research.

5. Research Methods

For the development of each of the factors at a certain age stage, we have specified the qualities that need to be formed (Table 01).

Table 1. Components of professional self-determination of children living in foster families

Formable qualities	The essence of the formed qualities in accordance with the age group of children living in foster families		
	Primary school age (7-10 years)	Younger teens (11-13 years)	Average teens (14-16 years)
Autonomy	Forming an idea of the world of professions and awareness of one's place in it	Expanding the idea of the importance of the right choice of profession for life self-determination	Determining the content of the concept of autonomy, applying the acquired knowledge in practice
Awareness of the world of professions and the ability to correlate this information with their characteristics	Broadening the horizons of foster children, developing interest in the most common professions	Creating the volume and effectiveness of knowledge about the world of professions	Informing about the diversity of professions and their features
The ability of decision-making	Expanding knowledge about people's production activities, developing self-planning skills	Forming an idea of their future professional image, developing the ability to realize their goals and values and building their life plans	Shaping the image of a future profession

The ability in planning one's professional life	The development of the ability to realistic assess the profession	The formation of skills at work when achieving personal goals; when choosing a profession	The formation of planning skills
The positive emotional attitude to the need to make a choice and make a decision	The development of the respect for work and people of work	Expanding ideas about various professions	Becoming familiar with the "range" of professions

For a more accurate and reliable assessment of the level of formation of readiness for personal and professional self-determination of children, diagnostic methods were selected and carried out (Table 02):

Table 2. Diagnostic methods for student readiness for personal and professional self-determination

Age category	Personal self-determination	Professional self-determination
Grade 1-4	Self-assessment technique (Dembo-Rubinstein) Method for the diagnosis of individual areas (O. Grebenuk, V. Belkina) (Grebenuk, 1995);	Essays "I am an adult"
Grade 5-7	"Attitude to moral standards of behavior" (E. Proshitskaya); "Self-esteem of self-confidence"; Questionnaire "The need for success" (Yu. Orlov)	"I prefer" (Klimov, 2007)
Grade 8-9	Questionnaire "Who am I?" (M. Kuhn and T. MacPartland, modification of T.. Rummyantseva)	Test to identify the motives for choosing a profession; Questionnaire for the identification of factors of professional self-determination (A.P. Chernyavskaya)

The study involved 32 substitute families, of which 14 families participated in the pilot work. The study involved 48 educators. The experimental group consisted of students in grades 1-4 (51 people), 5-7 classes (64 people), and 8-9 classes (32 people); the sample of children from foster families were 25. The control group consisted of 145 people, of which students in grades 1-4 – 56 people, 5-7 grades – 58 people, 8-9 grades – 31 people, including 21 children from foster families.

6. Findings

An analysis of the average development indicators of all areas of individuality in children from native families and children from substitute (foster) families studying in the initial link, reveals a rather significant difference in the development of intellectual, emotional and volitional spheres. These differences mean that children from foster families have less developed cognitive and creative thinking, ingenuity and flexibility of mind; cognitive processes are less pronounced – attention, imagination, memory and perception. In emotional terms, children from foster families have lower self-esteem and a high level of anxiety. The answers of the adopted children of this age groups allow us to conclude that they are easily irritated and upset over trifles; they feel insecure in the classroom and are afraid of school failure. Foster

children also have difficulty communicating and react painfully to comments, which indicates their low level of self-esteem. The main difficulties in the volitional sphere include the inability to relieve nervous tension, the lack of confidence in overcoming difficulties, and a certain inability to control oneself.

Analyzing the results of individual areas, it can be noted that children from native families (grades 8–9) have a more developed emotional and existential sphere and a less developed subject-practical sphere.

The goal of the work on personal self-determination was to expand ethical knowledge among children from foster families, to create awareness of moral values and a conscious moral choice, to develop the skills of self-control and self-esteem necessary to manage their emotions and optimize interpersonal interaction. The main qualities formed in the process of supporting professional self-determination include: autonomy, awareness, the ability to make decisions, the ability to plan, as well as a positive emotional attitude to the profession, the need to make choices and make decisions.

The most effective forms of work in this case include discussions, games, quizzes, various exercises, trainings and contests. As the main forms of organization of work on the formation of readiness for personal self-determination, we identified: modeling and playing of problem situations, role-playing games and problematization games (for example, a debate “Rights and obligations of adolescents: perspectives and realities”, the game “Traffic light of emotions”, “Take the initiative!”, “World of professions”, game-problematization “Letter without errors”); exercises aimed at the formation of an adequate self-esteem and positive image of “I” (exercise “Film strip”, training of reflection and self-control); the formation of the reflective position of children from foster families (conversation-discussion “Moral acts”, solving ethical dilemmas).

In the area of professional self-determination, along with traditional forms, such as games and discussions (for example, the discussion “Are you an autonomous person?”, A quiz game “World of professions”, game “Guide to professions”), we offer use training forms of group work based on the activity of the children themselves and promoting the development of professional self-awareness for the purpose of subsequent professional self-development (for example, the training “Formula of my profession”, “Ability to plan”, “Profession of my dreams”, “I + my “I”, “Portrait of my future profession”). Note that a large number of the proposed activities were carried out with the participation of foster parents.

An interesting project that we proposed to children studying in grades 1-4 and 5-7, and their parents, was the contests “Professions of my family” and “Protect the profession”. In the framework of these competitions, children and parents jointly made a story-presentation about professions in their family. So the children not only studied their family history from a professional point of view, but also with their parents got acquainted with the “assortment” of professions, learned many interesting facts about old professions. When choosing a nomination, the attention of the contestants, first of all, was drawn to the history of the professional fate of their relatives who have achieved success in their profession in the past and at the present time. Therefore, all participants were asked that their work should be traced to the family, with family traditions. Sources for writing the work could serve as oral stories, family memories, archives and photographs.

A lot of work was carried out with foster parents (Osion, 2015). The main idea of involving foster parents was to create the conditions for successful and productive cooperation with teachers. Basically, classes with parents were conducted by a school psychologist and social teacher. As the main tool for

teachers to influence the foster family, we have chosen parental education technologies. During the accompaniment of parents, the lecture forms had success: a mini-lecture “Flexibility of a foster family” and a parent lecture: “What foster parents should know about an adopted child”; “Peculiarities of adopting an adopted child in the family”, contributing to the formation of an objective image of an adopted child of the appropriate age category by expanding the knowledge of substitute parents about the various features of adopted children.

To assess the level of readiness for professional self-determination of children from foster families studying in grades 1-4, an analysis of the essays “I am an Adult” was carried out. 16 adopted children took part in writing the essays – 7 children in the control group and 9 in the experimental group. In their writings, children needed to link subjects and their interests with their future profession.

Analysis of essays showed that almost all adopted children from experimental groups (86.7%) compared to control groups (50.8%) show initial interest in the world of professions. In their submissions, 72.7% of adopted children describe themselves as future specialists in any field. In the control groups, 56.3% of children from foster families were able to express their perception of themselves as a future specialist. An important indicator is the mention of 43.4% of foster children from experimental groups that first they will need to receive appropriate professional education. Half of the surveyed children from foster families (51.3%) in the control and experimental groups at the end of the trial have an initial moral orientation to choose a profession and express the opinion that the choice of a profession largely depends on the person’s character and his personal qualities. Most often, children from foster families (44.2%) see themselves as specialists in the same profession as their parents.

Using the methods of mathematical statistics and comparative analysis at each stage of the work, we were able to observe the positive dynamics of changes in the main identified indicators of personal and professional self-determination of children from substitute families of control and experimental groups. Almost all children from substitute families studying in grades 1–4 have an average level of readiness for personal self-determination by reducing the number of children with a low level and an overall increase in the average score. The number of foster children studying in grades 5-7 decreased with a low level of readiness for personal self-determination from 50% to 25% in grade 5 and from 60% to 40% in grade 7 with a general increase in the average score from 1.09 to 1.19 in 5th grade, from 1.11 to 1.27 in 6th grade, from 1.07 to 1.29 in 7th grade. In terms of the average score, a positive shift occurred due to an increase in the number of foster teenagers studying in grades 8–9 with an average level of readiness for personal self-determination from 25% to 50% in grade 8 and from 40% to 60% in grade 9 with a general increase in average point.

7. Conclusion

In the practice of teachers' work, a holistic system of supporting the personal and professional choice of adopted children has not yet been formed, aimed involving them in the process of individual designing of their own personal and professional development. Today, in pedagogical science and in the practice of the work of educational organizations, the importance of determining the conditions and developing means of organizing integrated support for foster families, providing the most favorable conditions for the individual development, socialization and self-determination of foster children, is growing. The importance

of the research problem is growing due to the fact that the foster family as a form of living arrangements for orphans and children left without parental care is currently the most promising and preferred, in connection with this, the need for competent organization of interaction between subjects of support of personal and professional self-determination of adopted children.

In our research, the conditions for the implementation of the model of the process of pedagogical support for the formation of readiness for self-determination of children living in foster families in the framework of the school are identified: the creation of a specially organized educational and socializing environment for children living in foster families in a comprehensive school that helps teachers organize work on the formation of readiness for self-determination of adopted children; actualization of family relationships and joint activities necessary to optimize parent-child interaction; taking into account the characteristics of adopted children, distinguishing them from native children, and preventing the formation of readiness for self-determination.

Qualitative and quantitative analysis of the results of experimental work revealed a certain increase in the level of formation of readiness for self-determination in experimental groups, where educational activities were based on the implementation of the model of pedagogical support, subject to the identified pedagogical conditions within the school.

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